

FROM THE MINBAR

GENEROSITY IN RAMADAN: INHERENT & WISE INVESTMENT

Khutbah delivered by Imam Dr. Zijad Delic at SNMC on August 19th, 2011 corresponding to Ramadan 19th, 1432 H.

BACKGROUND

Indeed all praise is for God, Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings of God be upon Muhammad (S), his family, Khulafai Rashidin, all his Companions, and all those who follow in their footsteps until the Last Day. All praise is for God! We praise Him. We seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. We seek God's refuge from evils of ourselves and from our evil actions. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except God, alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (S) is His Messenger.

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam. As Salamu 'Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu.

INTRODUCTION

Among the many facets of Ramadan, generosity is an important attribute that believers seek to renew and increase.

This is the month when Muslims open their hearts and wallets, sharing with others – both individuals and worthy organizations – the material blessings that Allah has so abundantly bestowed upon them.

Through being generous and sharing with others some of the riches Muslims have, they testify that they care about those who have less than them.

DEFINITION

Generosity is defined as the willingness to give freely. Islam encourages this concept of generosity so much so that it is embedded in one of the five pillars of Islam -- the obligatory charity known as *Zakat*.

In Arabic, the term *Zakat* literally means purification of the heart however; it is also the payment, from surplus money, of an obligatory charity designed by God to provide for all the needy members of the community. It is a fixed calculable amount.

There is also another form of generosity in Islam called *Sadaqa*. Linguistically, *Sadaqa* means truthfulness, and some scholars have



described it as the heart being truthful to its Creator. Anything given generously - freely to others - with the intention of pleasing God is *Sadaqa*. *Sadaqa* can be as simple as a smile, helping an elderly person with their groceries or removing objects from the road or path.

INHERENT TO ISLAM

Islam is founded on kindness, and charity; narrow-mindedness and greed are foreign, even toxic to its very structure. Thus, generosity is inherent in Muslim faith.

Islam guides believers to do all kinds of good and virtuous deeds so that righteous living and generosity are established as permanent habits.

By giving without complaint Muslims actually help themselves first. As Almighty Allah says in the Qur'an: "*Those who spent their wealth (in Allah's Cause) by night and day, in secret and public, they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.*" (Al Baqarah, 274)

THE VALUE OF GENEROSITY

The companions of Prophet Muhammad understood the value of being generous. Abdullah ibn Omar was seen in the market buying fodder for his camel on credit. One of the men queried this knowing that

Abdullah had received 4000 dirhams and a blanket the previous day.

It was explained that before nightfall Abdullah had distributed the money amongst the needy. He then took the blanket, threw it over his shoulder and headed home, but by the time he arrived even the blanket was gone, he had given it all to the needy people.

After the death of the Prophet, the people faced great hardship due to drought. They came to Abu Bakr asking him to provide them with enough to sustain them, but he was unable to help; the treasury was empty.

Just at that time, the camel caravan belonging to Uthman (r.a) arrived from Damascus. It was filled with foodstuffs and other goods.

The merchants gathered at Uthman's house offering him large amounts of money for the goods; however, he turned them down saying he was prepared only to give the goods to the One from whom he would receive the greatest reward.

Uthman gave all the goods to the starving people of Madinah and did not charge them. He knew that God would reward him with something far greater than money.

Even in the direst of circumstances, person who is a true believer in Almighty God is ready to be generous.

The people came to the Prophet Muhammad and asked, "*If someone has nothing to give, what will he do?*" He said, "*He should*

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Inherent & Wise Investment

⇒ In next issue: 'Istiqamah in Islam'

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work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity (from what he earns)." The people further asked, "If he cannot find even that?" He replied, "He should help the needy who appeal for help." Then the people asked, "If he cannot do that?" He replied, "Then he should perform good deeds and keep away from evil deeds and this will be regarded as charitable deeds." (Bukhari)

And God says in the Quran that He will repay the generosity of a believer. "And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged." (Quran 2:272)

God is the One who provides for us and He expects us to share generously. We are encouraged to be benevolent and unselfish with our possessions, with our time and with our exemplary behavior towards others.

A WISE INVESTMENT

Generosity can be viewed as a wise investment in the future. Generosity or *Sadaqa* may pave the way to Paradise because with every generous act comes great reward from God.

However, being generous does not only mean giving freely from what you have in abundance. Generosity does not lie in giving away something that is no longer useful but in giving freely from the things we love or need.

Aisha (the wife of the Prophet) said, "A lady, along with her two daughters came to me asking for some alms, but she found nothing with me except one date which I gave to her and she divided it between her two daughters." (Bukhari)

God tells us in the Quran that whatever we give away generously, with the intention of pleasing Him, He will replace it. God knows what is in the hearts of men. Say: "Truly, my Lord enlarges the provision for whom He wills of His slaves, and also restricts it) for him, and whatsoever you spend of anything (in God's Cause), He will replace it. And He is the Best of providers." (Quran 34:39)

THE MONTH OF GENEROSITY

It is every Muslim's responsibility to take this verse deeply to heart during Ramadan. He or she should plan and prepare for this special month of caring and generosity in a balanced way, not spending excessively on personal wants and desires, but rather allotting just enough for personal needs.

In this way the individual has the means to give generously to others, that Allah may bestow His mercy and make his/her charity blessed.

Muhammad (S) the Messenger of God, said: "Ramadan is the month of caring; and it is the month where sustenance (provisions) of the believer increases." (Ibn Khuzaymah)

Muslim communities can be successful in all facets of life only when relationships among their members and with their institutions are sincere and solid.

To achieve and maintain this success, Islam has framed very realistic laws by which people's hearts and minds can be prepared to focus on increasing their righteous and virtuous deeds.

Additionally Islamic teachings are established to guide people to greater co-operation as groups, helping one another, and acting righteously for the good of all.

Islam teaches believers that giving will not deplete their *Rizq* (material goods) but will increase them.

Thus, giving is not only about satisfying the needs of the poor; it also helps the giver attain priceless riches of peace and satisfaction and banish the forces of rancour and jealousy.

As we read in the Qur'an: "So keep your duty to God and be aware of Him as much as you can; listen and obey and spend charity for the benefit of your own soul. And whoever is saved from his own greediness, they are successful ones." (At Tagabun 16)

The Qur'an further teaches that charity and generosity done in the name of Allah guarantee success in this world and the hereafter. *And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be dealt wrongly.*" (Al Baqarah 272)

In a Hadith, it was reported that Prophet Muhammad (S) said: "Protect yourself against the fire, even if it be only by (giving) a piece of date, and if one cannot even fulfill this, then by saying a good word." (Muslim)

In another Hadith, he said: "Do not look down on anything good, even if it is meeting your brother/sister with a cheerful face." (Muslim)

CONCLUSION

Ramadan is an excellent opportunity to spend for the sake of our Creator. One can choose from many community projects of SNMC as well as supporting aid to needy brothers and sisters locally or worldwide, especially these days we are obliged to support those affected in Somali drought.

The Messenger of God gave the best example through his own lifestyle: "Prophet Muhammad (S) was the most generous out of all people and Ramadan was the time when he was the most generous." (Bukhari)

There is no better example to follow than in giving *Zakat* to purify both your property and soul. And by giving *Sadaqat ul Jariyah* (permanent *Sadaqa*) for community projects that help maintain our Muslim identity, you are supporting the interests of Canadian Muslims and Canada itself.

Charity does not decrease your wealth; rather it increases our wealth, brings prosperity to it and puts smiles on givers' faces.

AN ACTION ITEM

Please Donate ONE Prayer Spot for \$2,500 and be the ONE of ONE HUNDRED brothers and sisters who will be the part of this great initiative during the month of 2011 Ramadan, Insha Allah.

Let us pray to Almighty Allah to help us become generous for our own good so that we ALL become dear to Him – our Rabb – and dear to one another – our brothers and sisters in faith and humanity – during these blessed days of the month of Ramadan. Allahumma Amin!

If YOU like this Khutbah and what we, at your SNMC, do, PLEASE:

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